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*USA*

## They Say Soviets Were Handed a Gem

# 'Stealth' Case Dismays Experts

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The debate over who leaked what to whom, and when, about radar-invisible Stealth aircraft misses the real sore point for the nonpolitical professionals in the defense community.

They angrily believe the Carter administration handed their counterparts in Russia a gem of information far more valuable than any of the sketchy technical details about Stealth that have been printed in the press.

The gem, in their view, is confirmation by the highest defense executive in the government that Stealth is not just another technological dream but a fully realized weapon that "alters the military balance significantly."

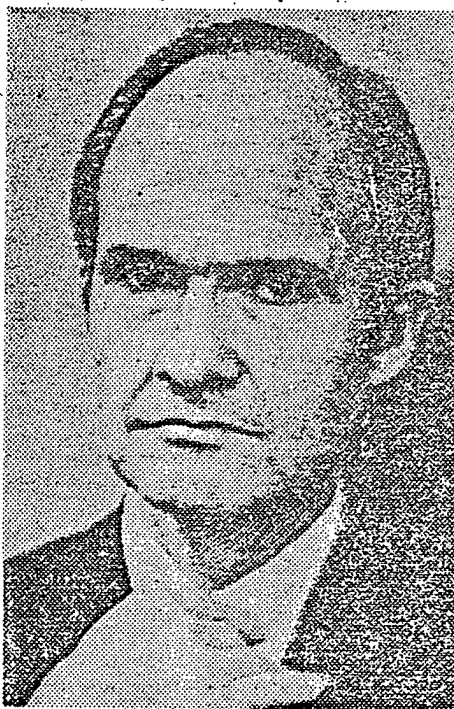
Armed with such a statement from Defense Secretary Harold Brown, who made it at a televised Aug. 22 news conference,

### News Analysis

the Russian general in charge of air defense has a better-than-ever chance of obtaining more money to counter Stealth aircraft, in the view of these specialists.

Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union has enough money to cover every bet in the defense field. The Kremlin's analysts are overwhelmed by thousands of pages of information about American weapons being pursued by military laboratories or ballyhooed by defense contractors. Trade journals, newspapers, scientific papers, speeches by generals, congressional hearings and floor debates add up to a groaning smorgasbord of information—some right, some wrong—about American weaponry.

Because the Soviet government plants stories in Russian publications, Kremlin analysts reading about Stealth in the American press must at least entertain the possibility that those stories are intended to send Russian technology down the wrong path. This further complicates the job of



LT. GEN. BRENT SCOWCROFT  
... "The real damage of the revelations..."

deciding which American military projects are the important ones to worry about.

What Brown and Pentagon research director William J. Perry did, with advance approval of the Carter White House, was assure the Kremlin that Stealth was indeed something to worry about. The Pentagon executives said test Stealth planes had already been built and flown successfully. Brown also said Stealth technology would be incorporated in any future bomber.

Not that those professionals in the defense and intelligence communities liked the articles in The Washington Post, Aviation Week, Aerospace Daily and other publications on Stealth technology dating back to 1976. They did not. But the professionals

contend that the Carter administration, through the Pentagon press conference, alerted the Kremlin to where the United States stood on this radar-foiling technology which both sides have been pursuing for decades.

There were articles back in the '30s and '40s about the possibility of building an atomic bomb. But such press disclosures, the professionals argue, did not impel the government to tell the world that it had actually developed and tested an atomic bomb, that it worked and would alter the military balance.

Brown's counter to such criticism is that the Aug. 22 press conference disclosed nothing that would help the Russians develop countermeasures to Stealth aircraft. The really hot technical information has not leaked out anywhere, the defense secretary said. And because the Stealth program was taking on so many more people, requiring so much more money from Congress and entering the debate over what kind of bomber to build, Brown said, it would have leaked out in a matter of months anyway.

The active-duty professionals cannot go public with their indignation over what they consider the politicization of Stealth without risking their careers. But their complaints in one-on-one conversations do fit with what a retired member of their community, Air Force Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, former national security adviser to President Ford and currently an adviser to GOP presidential candidate Ronald Reagan, told a press conference yesterday.

Said Scowcroft:

"The real damage of the revelations... is that the administration announced that the program was doable. The other important aspect of the revelations is that it was announced not only that it was new but that it was of the highest importance, indeed, that it changed the strategic balance... This is of enormous significance in [the Soviets'] allocation of resources."